

Approved 11/09/2004.

5.1

NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, October 12, 2004

MINUTES

Call to Order. Chairperson David S. Gordon called the Regular Meeting of the Newport School Committee to order at 7:29 p.m. at the Thompson Middle School Beatrice Berman Bazarsky Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria. Attendance was as follows: School Committee Members: Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, Mary Jane Barry, Ph.D., David R. Carlin, Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., Jo Eva Gaines, and Thomas S. Phelan; School Department: Superintendent of Schools Mary C. Canole, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Schools Robert B. Power, Ed.D., Director of Special Education Linda Martin, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Judith M. Droitcour, Business Manager Bruce Alexander, Director of Property Services Paul Fagan, Coordinator of Human Resources and Information Services Fran Eames (absent), School Building Principals, Administrators, and School Committee Counsel Neil P. Galvin (arrived at 9:20 p.m.). Chairperson Gordon apologized to the public for the lateness of the beginning of the meeting due to a Special Meeting which was held prior to the Regular Meeting this evening.

ROLL CALL.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

1.0 MOMENT OF SILENCE.

ه Wayne Ramey: who passed away on Saturday, October 9, 2004, at home. He was the Teacher of Social Studies at Rogers High School.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT. Public Comment was received from the Residents Council: Susan Long, President, Yvonne Virgadamo, Parent, Tonya Echols, Parent, and Sara Hersey, Parent, relative to the budget and the potential of closing classrooms at Sullivan School. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole announced that no classrooms would be closed at Sullivan School, which would be recommended this evening under Agenda Item No. 7.2: Budget—Elementary Classroom Closures. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to suspend the rules and amend the Agenda to consider at this time Agenda Item No. 7.2: Budget—Elementary Classroom Closures. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0). Mrs. Gaines made a motion not to close any classrooms at Sullivan School this academic year, as presented. Mr.

DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0). Mrs. Gaines made a motion not to close any classrooms at any schools this academic year. Dr. Barry seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0). Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole summarized to the public that based on the present low enrollment figures specifically in grades two and four for this school year, she sought to determine whether or not it was feasible to close one second grade and one fourth grade classroom somewhere in the district as soon as possible. She stated that after the Committee's discussion on this matter at their September 21, 2004, meeting, she received numerous visits, phone calls, and letters from concerned parents and staff members adamantly opposed to any elementary closures and emphasized that the closures would happen only if she could accomplish the move without hurting students and families and had asked the Principals of Sullivan, Cranston-Calvert, Sheffield, Underwood, and Carey Schools to delineate for her the impact of closing a classroom in their respective schools and that their impact studies were before the Committee this evening. She commended the parents who came before the Committee this evening voicing their concern. Members of the public applauded, and the parents who spoke before the Committee personally thanked the Superintendent of Schools and School Committee.

3.0 STUDENT ACTIVITIES.

3.1 Student Council Update. Student Council President, Keelan Maguire, provided an update on the Student Council activities planned for this current academic year to date: Spirit Week, Pep Rally, Homecoming Game and Dance, PSATs, and Class Elections. Ms. Maguire stated that there was a somber atmosphere at Rogers High School with the recent death of Social Studies Teacher Wayne Ramey this past Saturday, October 9, 2004.

4.0 RESOLUTIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT.

4.1 Certificates of Achievement.

4.1.1 Rogers High School MADD Program (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). On behalf of the Newport School Committee, Member Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., presented Certificates of Achievement to students who participated in the 2003-2004 Rogers High School MADD Program, as well as MADD Advisor Richard Niejadlik. Mr. Niejadlik commended the students for their participation in the Program.

Agenda Items Taken Out of Order. At the request of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole, Mrs. Gaines made a motion to suspend the rules and amend the Agenda to consider Agenda Items No. 7.1: Central Office Review and Discussion Items No. 6.1: Energy Education: Update; No. 6.2.1: Bridge to Success Program: Update; No. 6.2.2: East Bay Smiles Program: Update; and No. 6.2.3: Rogers

High School: Foreign Language Program Proposal. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

7.0 ACTION

7.1 Central Office Review. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole stated that in the Fall of 2003 Newport Public Schools entered into partnership with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and the Rhode Island Department of Education to conduct a Central Office Review. She stated that the review process was developed by the Annenberg Institute's School Communities that Work Task Force to help school districts examine the ways in which their central offices provide leadership and support for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Representing the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, Frank Barnes and Judith Pelchat then presented the background process, findings, recommendations, and next steps through a PowerPoint Presentation. Mr. Barnes reported that the following five questions emerged as representative of the findings and as potential guiding questions for school improvement: How are our students doing?; What are we doing to support consistently high quality instruction for each student in every school?; What are we doing to engage families in the education of their children?; What are we doing to build bridges between Newport Public Schools and the Newport community?; and In what ways does the organizational culture of the Central Office reflect a service orientation in support of students,

teachers, principals, families, and the community? Mr. Barnes then cited the five recommendations: Identify and replicate “best practices”; Continue to provide high quality professional learning opportunities for all educators; Communicate clearly about decisions related to resource allocations and district initiatives; Clarify roles and responsibilities; and Reconsider the roles played by central office personnel in providing direct support to schools. Discussion followed by Committee Members. Possibilities for future engagement—next steps for continued collaboration in building on the central office review while connecting it with the district’s ongoing strategic planning were reviewed by Mr. Barnes and stated that Brown University commended the Members of the Central Office Review Team throughout this process: Newport Public Schools and their community, the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole commended Frank Barnes and Jude Pelchat of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and David Abbott from the Rhode Island Department of Education for bringing this partnership to Newport Public Schools. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to receive the Central Office Review Report, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 Energy Education: Update. Newport Public Schools Energy

Manager Richard Niejadlik and Vice President Michael Rodrigues, representing Energy Education, Inc., updated the Committee on efforts made relative to energy education through a PowerPoint Presentation. The presentation was inclusive of a seven-month report: January, 2004, through July, 2004. The Report cited primary goals of the energy management program for Newport Public Schools inclusive of cost avoidance, tracking performance, consumption, utility cost comparisons, and environmental benefits. Discussion followed. Mr. Rodrigues reviewed how the quantity consumption statistical program is calculated.

Mr. Niejadlik reminded the Committee that Newport Public Schools has an Energy Management Conservation Policy to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to conserve energy and natural resources while exercising sound financial management. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to receive the Energy Education: Update, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

6.2 Teaching and Learning:

6.2.1 Bridge to Success Program: Update. At the request of School Committee Member Thomas Phelan, Rogers High School Principal John Harrington updated the Committee on the Bridge to Success Program sponsored by Roger Williams University of Bristol, Rhode Island. Mr. Harrington introduced the Bridge to Success Student Mentors and Roger Williams University Bridge to Success Coordinators Miquel Lopes, Eddie Henderson, and Ruth Thumbzten.

He defined the program, as follows: to help create and maintain a college bound high school career, to help minority and underserved high school students reach their collegiate potential, to build on strengths and help overcome weaknesses, and to build confidence to pursue college, as identified by the United States Census Bureau. He clarified community support for the program, how students access the program, yearly evaluation report, a list of the community members who serve as the Steering Committee, a list of community organizations which provide financial support for the program, and the eight benefits of the program. Mr. Lopes reviewed with the Committee the student eligibility for program registration and referenced the details of the program for potential participants. He stated that participation is voluntary and the program is focused on the underserved population in our school community. Discussion followed. At the request of Mr. Phelan, Mr. Harrington and Mr. Lopes spoke to the issue of a recent student incident relative to the equity and equality for students accessing the program. Discussion continued relative to student enrollment. Chairperson Gordon commended the efforts of the Program.

6.2.2 East Bay Smiles Program: Update. Coordinator/Hygienist Debra Patterson updated the Committee on the East Bay Smiles School Dental Program. The East Bay Community Action Program, formerly known as New Visions for Newport County, was awarded a grant to increase access to primary and preventative dental care for elementary school children. Ms. Patterson indicated that with the

generosity of the Bank of Newport contributing \$20,000, the Program was able to purchase portable dental equipment and related supplies which was recently set up at Sullivan School, creating an on-site dental room to provide exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, and sealants. She stated that this service is available to students who have not seen their own dentist within the past year and that, according to Rhode Island Kids Count, students with decayed teeth may have chronic pain, impaired speech development, inability to concentrate in school, poor appearance, and reduced self-esteem, resulting in oral health issues having a negative impact on a child's ability to learn. Discussion followed. At the request of School Committee Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole will forward a letter of appreciation to the Bank of Newport for their financial contributions, commitment, and support to the community and its children to this Program.

6.2.3 Rogers High School: Foreign Language Program Proposal. At the request of School Committee Member David Carlin, the Committee reviewed the Foreign Language Program offerings at area high schools in comparison to the offerings at Rogers High School: Portsmouth, Middletown, Portsmouth Abbey, and St. George's. Discussion followed. Mr. Carlin suggested that the Committee give future thought to propose to offer a richer base of foreign languages, perhaps inclusive of Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Chinese at Rogers High School. Rogers High School currently offers French, Spanish, and German. Mrs. Gaines suggested that Newport Public Schools could

become more flexible through the availability of electronic learning for our students. Both Chairperson Gordon and Member Dr. Barry reiterated the need for regionalization collaboration among the island schools, both public and private. Mr. Carlin thanked the Members of the Committee for their comments. Mr. Carlin suggested that the Latin Survey conducted last year be more scientifically conducted in the future. Public Comment was received from Newport School Committee Candidate and Resident Robert T. Oliveira relative to foreign languages and the disposition of Lenthal School. He voiced his concern that the Committee needed to focus on the current issues before the School District at this time not discussions such as tonight on Bridge to Success and Foreign Languages.

5.0 CONSENT AGENDA.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to consent to the approval of the Consent Agenda, as presented below, with the exception of Item No. 5.8: Requests for Conferences/Workshops for discussion. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion, which carried (7-0).

5.1 Approval of Minutes.

- **Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, September 21, 2004.**

5.2

to

5.5 Personnel Actions.

Retirements.

Request for Retirement of Donna McGoff, Guidance Counselor, Newport Area Career and Technical Center, as presented.

Leaves of Absence.

First Request for Leave of Absence. Request for Leave of Absence of Joann L. Pasquale, Secretary to Assistant Superintendent, as presented.

Second Request for Leave of Absence. Request for Leave of Absence of Jennifer A. Conheeney, Teacher of Grade 2, Sullivan School, as presented.

Third Request for Leave of Absence. Request for Leave of Absence of Jared Conheeney, Dean of Students, Thompson Middle School, as presented.

Appointments.

Head Hockey Coach, Rogers High School. Request for Appointment of Robert Barr, Jr., Head Hockey Coach, Rogers High School, as presented.

Assistant Baseball Coach, Rogers High School. Request for Appointment of James W. Thomas, Assistant Baseball Coach, Rogers High School, as presented.

Instructors, Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center. Requests for Appointments of the AIALC and VTA Instructors, as presented, pending funding.

5.6 Requests for Waiver of Rental Fees. There were no Requests for Waiver of Rental Fees.

5.7 Requests for Field Trips. There were no Requests for Field Trips.

Discussion and Vote:

5.8 Requests for Conferences/Workshops. There were two Requests for Conferences/Workshops. At the request of Mr. Carlin, Dr. Canole clarified the costs of the Conference for both participants. At the request of Mr. Leary, Dr. Canole responded that professional

development was a necessary component in order to carry out the functions of IDEA Regulations for Special Education. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to consent to the approval of the two Requests for Conferences/Workshops, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

5.9 Requests for Home Instruction. Three Requests for Home Instruction, as presented. Discussion followed. At the request of Mr. DeAscentis, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert B. Power explained that all parents requesting home instruction are asked to meet with him to review their home instruction request; but, in this case, the parents declined the request to meet but provided all the required information necessary to request home instruction.

5.10 Bids. There were no Bids.

5.11 Fiscal Impact Analysis. There were no Requests for Fiscal Impact Analysis.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole read aloud the approved Personnel Actions dated October 12, 2004, as presented.

6.0 DISCUSSION

Taken out of Order at the Beginning of the Meeting.

6.1 Energy Education: Update.

6.2 Teaching and Learning:

6.2.1 Bridge to Success Program: Update.

6.2.2 East Bay Smiles Program: Update.

6.2.3 Rogers High School: Foreign Language Program Proposal.

6.3 Subcommittee Reports:

6.3.1 Aquidneck Island School Committee Improvement Network (AISCIN). As stated by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole, there was no new business to report to the Committee at this time.

6.3.2 Newport School Committee/Newport City Council Liaison. As reported by Mr. Leary, the Subcommittee has not met.

6.3.3 Policy. Subcommittee Chairperson Jo Eva Gaines asked for guidance from the Committee if the Policy Subcommittee should resume meeting on legislation that came out of the last assembly or

wait until after the election when a new Policy Subcommittee Chairperson is selected. Chairperson Gordon suggested waiting until after the election to select a new Policy Chairperson.

6.3.4 Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC). Mrs. Gaines reviewed with the Committee the work to date of the Rhode Island Association of School Committees. She reminded the Committee that the Association had recently distributed the Flyer for the upcoming Collective Bargaining Seminar II: Ensuring the Effectiveness of School Committee Leadership to be held at the Radisson Airport Hotel on October 23, 2004, and encouraged all Committee Members, Candidates, and Superintendents to attend.

6.3.5 School Committee/State Legislators. As reported by Mr. Carlin, the Subcommittee has not met.

6.3.6 Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. As reported by Mr. Leary, the Task Force will meet next Monday, October 18, 2004.

6.3.7 Thompson Building Project:

6.3.7.1 City/School Citizens' Technical Advisory Task Force.

6.3.7.2 Budget Advisory Subcommittee

As stated by Mr. DeAscentis, the next meeting of the Thompson Building Project: Task Force and Advisory Subcommittee had not yet been determined. He did indicate, however, that the Project would be

coming to closure in the very near future.

7.0 ACTION

Taken out of Order at the Beginning of the Meeting.

7.1 Central Office Review.

7.2 Budget. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole indicated to the Committee that in order to comply with state statute that requires a reconciled budget, she recommended that they reduce three line items, noted below, at this time, to bring the school budget into compliance and stated that administration would closely monitor these accounts over the next few months to determine whether the school department can, in fact, live with these amounts. She stated that should the administration determine that this is not possible, she would return to them for further discussion and potential action: To reduce the expense side of the budget to equal the revenue side of the budget: Account 710-981-10180-92780: Early Retirement Benefits. A reduction in this account of \$259,613; Present: \$2,525,685 reduced to: \$2,266,072; Account 710-982-41755-9340:

Pupil Transportation—Regular. A reduction in this account of \$259,612; Present: \$445,401 reduced to: \$185,789; and Account 710-984-32209-9371: Special Education Tuition: A reduction in this account of \$259,613; Present: \$1,932,899 reduced to: \$1,673,287.

In addition, she asked the Committee to adjust the 12% budget cuts total formally approved by them to the reduced amount noted, as follows: The present Revenue Budget is \$35,013,786 and the Expense Budget is \$35,922,299, with a difference of \$908,513. Based on the Central Office and Building Principal review of each line item included in the 12% nonsalary and benefit accounts reduction plan, it is not possible to achieve the estimated \$219,612 of savings. It is only possible to achieve a savings of \$129,675: Difference: \$908,513; Achievable 12% Reductions: \$129,675, with a difference of \$778,838.

Mr. Carlin made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation, as presented. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion. Discussion followed. At the request of Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, Business Manager Bruce Alexander answered questions relative to the revised calculations. Mr. Carlin withdrew his original motion and referred to the School Committee Minutes of September 21, 2004, on Page 10, No. 7.2: Budget, which indicated the action taken by the Committee at its meeting on September 13, 2004, to reduce all nonsalary and benefit accounts by 12 percent. Mr. Carlin

stated that the Committee would need first to rescind its September 13, 2004, vote representing an estimated savings of \$219,612 and then insert the revised figure of \$129,675, representing estimated savings, as presented. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to rescind the vote of the Committee at its Meeting of September 13, 2004, to reduce all nonsalary and benefit accounts by 12 percent, representing an estimated savings of \$219,612, and to reduce all nonsalary and benefit accounts with an estimated savings of \$129,675, as presented.

Dr. Barry seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Chairperson Robert J. Leary stated he could not support this motion without reviewing each individual line account. Mr. Carlin stated he would not support this motion because the Committee has continually revised the estimated savings. The motion carried (4-3). Those Members voting in favor of the motion were: Chairperson David S. Gordon, Mary Jane Barry, Ph.D., Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., and Jo Eva Gaines. Those Members voting against the motion were: Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, David R. Carlin, and Thomas S. Phelan. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the balanced budget for reporting purposes, as presented. Mr. Phelan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Taken out of Order at the Beginning of the Meeting.

7.2 Budget—Elementary Classroom Closures.

7.3 Rogers High School: America's Choice Contract. Rogers High School Principal John Harrington submitted to the Committee the

Rogers High School: America's Choice Contract for 2004-2005 and its direct services for the program totaling \$45,900, which are critical for the expansion to Ramp Up II and for the continuation of direct support from America's Choice Design (National Center on Education and the Economy). Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the 2004-2005 Rogers High School: America's Choice Contract with the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), as presented, in the amount of \$45,900, and pending the approval of School Committee Counsel Neil P. Galvin. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion. At the request of Mr. Carlin, Counsel Galvin stated this was a sole source provider. At the request of Mr. Leary, Mr. Cykert spoke to the continuation of the program for the next academic year. The motion carried unanimously (6-1). Mr. Leary voted against the motion.

8.0 Expenditure and Revenue Reports, Enrollment Reports, and Damage Reports.

8.1 Expenditure and Revenue Reports. Business Manager Bruce Alexander provided the Committee with the Expenditure and Revenue Reports dated October 1, 2004.*

8.2 Enrollment Reports. There were no Enrollment Reports presented this month.

8.3 Damage Reports. There were no Damage Reports presented this month.

***Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Expenditure and Revenue Reports, Enrollment Reports: N/A, and Damage Reports: N/A, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).**

9.0 SUGGESTED MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Canole reviewed the meeting dates and suggested agenda topics, as noted below:

**9.1 7:00 a.m., To be Determined: Newport School Committee
September 1, 2004, 7 a.m. (Cancelled) Thompson Building Project
City/School Citizens' Technical
Advisory Task Force and
Budget Advisory Subcommittee
Topic:
Monthly Meeting
Location:
Newport Public Schools: Administration Center**

**9.2 7:00 p.m., October 26, 2004: Newport School Committee
Special Meeting**

Topic:

- **Rogers High School Improvement:**

NEASC: Facility Proposal

- **Lenthal School Disposition**

Location:

Thompson Middle School:

Beatrice Berman Bazarsky

Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria

**9.3 7:00 p.m., November 9, 2004: Newport School Committee
Regular Meeting**

Location:

Thompson Middle School:

Beatrice Berman Bazarsky

Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria

10.0 Executive Session.

At 10:02 p.m., Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to go into Executive Session under jurisdiction of Rhode Island State Law, Chapter 46, 42-46-5 – Exceptions (a)(1) Personal Matters, and the person or persons affected have been notified in advance in writing and advised

that they may request that the discussion be held in an open session; (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation; and (a)(9) any hearings on, or discussions of, a grievance filed pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

OPEN SESSION

At 10:27 p.m., the meeting was called in Open Session.

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Adjournment. At 10:29 p.m., Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

David S. Gordon	Mary C. Canole, Ed.D.
Chairperson	Clerk